

VZCZCXRO1024  
OO RUEHAST  
DE RUEHPS #0599/01 1981850  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 171850Z JUL 06  
FM USOFFICE PRISTINA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6306  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0920  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAF//  
RUFNPKD/USDOCO SOUTH NAPLES IT//INTAF//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000599

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/ACE, DRL, PRM, IO, NSC FOR BBRAUN,  
USUN, BUDAPEST FOR POSNER-MULLEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNMIK](#) [KDEM](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: ACTING SRSG PUSHES BELGRADE/WHO ON  
TREATMENT OF LEAD-POISONED ROMA

REF: PRISTINA 339

PRISTINA 00000599 001.2 OF 002

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Although medication is on hand, medical personnel have been trained, and construction of a clinic has been completed, treatment of Mitrovica-area Roma acutely ill with lead poisoning has not begun. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been waiting for more than three months for the Serbian ministry of health to authorize ethnic Serb doctors in Mitrovica to administer the medication (DSMA) imported for use in Mitrovica. A/SRSG Steven Schook told CDA that he had discussed the matter on July 14 with Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, chief of the Belgrade-based Kosovo Coordination Center, and that Raskovic-Ivic had not been encouraging but agreed to discuss the matter with the ministry. Schook said he told Raskovic-Ivic that UNMIK would authorize Kosovo Albanian doctors to undertake treatment of the Roma if the ministry does not come around within one week. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) With USG assistance funds in the pipeline, UNMIK has completed construction of a medical clinic at the north Mitrovica temporary relocation center (Osterode) that houses 450 of northern Kosovo's 530 ethnic Roma who have fled lead-contaminated refugee camps. At the end of April, the World Health Organization (WHO) determined that 55 of 120 Roma children tested had "dangerous" levels of lead in their blood (reftel). WHO thereafter trained ethnic Serb and ethnic Albanian medical personnel to administer the lead abatement medication DSMA and an initial shipment of the drug has been imported by UNMIK from the U.S.

¶3. (SBU) All ethnic Serb medical personnel in Kosovo are accredited by the Serbian ministry of health, notwithstanding UNMIK's ostensibly exclusive jurisdiction. DSMA has not been approved for use by the Serbian ministry of health, and therefore Serbian health workers will not administer it. When UNMIK negotiated early this year a detailed agreement with ethnic Serb political leaders from Mitrovica for the use of Osterode, WHO quietly applied through its Belgrade office to the Serbian ministry of health for permission to administer the drug. (NOTE: The Mitrovica-area Roma have

generally tense relations with area Serbs but a history of serious violence with area Albanians, leaving engagement of ethnic Serbs to provide treatment the better of two problematic options. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) WHO's Pristina chief Gerry McWeeney reports that the ministry never formally answered WHO's application to use DSMA. McWeeney told poloff July 13 that WHO Belgrade met with the Serbian minister of health on July 10 and maintained that Serbia, as signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is obligated to immediately provide treatment to seriously at-risk Roma children. UNMIK sent a similar message in a letter to the ministry in the beginning of June, and received no response.

15. (SBU) One million USD in USG funds for medical treatment will arrive as soon as UNMIK's Acting SRSG Steven Schook signs a grant agreement sent to UNMIK on July 13. CDA reminded A/SRSG Steven Schook on July 14 that WHO had previously suggested that ethnic Albanian medical personnel treat the Roma if the Serb personnel cannot. Schook raised the matter that day with Kosovo Coordination Center head Sanda Raskovic-Ivic. According to Schook, Raskovic-Ivic was well-familiar with the situation but doubted the ministry would authorize the treatment. Schook said she promised to within one week come back to Schook after talking to the ministry.

16. (SBU) COMMENT. WHO's evident plan to wait indefinitely for the Serbian ministry of health to authorize treatment is unacceptable given the acute health threat involved. Schook seems prepared to force the issue. After many months of effort by well-intentioned internationals, including the USG and WHO, most obstacles to treatment have been eliminated. Schook's no-nonsense approach may provide just the right prescription for eliminating the rest. END COMMENT.

PRISTINA 00000599 002.2 OF 002

MCBRIDE